

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
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LIKKUTEI SICHOT

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume VIII: *Vayikra*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

METZORA

CAUSES OF IMPURITY

This week's Torah reading speaks about the ritual impurity imparted by a woman in the *niddah* state. Our Sages explain¹ that this impurity came as a result of G-d's curse after the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge. This implies that the *niddah* state is not a natural phenomenon, but a result of sin, a sin so severe that it is considered the source of all subsequent sins.²

A deeper appreciation of this concept can be gained by understanding the nature of Divine retribution. Consider another punishment humanity suffered because of the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge: our expulsion from *Gan Eden*. This punishment was not merely the penalty meted out for the sin, but instead — as are all expressions of Divine retribution³ — a direct result of the sin itself. The Garden of Eden was a place which could not bear the existence of evil. By eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam internalized evil within his being. In this state, he could no longer remain in the Garden.

1. *Eruvin* 100b.

2. See *Shabbos* 146a; *Zohar*, Vol. I, 52b. Note the explanation of this concept in the *maamar* entitled *Al Kein Yomru HaMoshlim*, 5691.

3. See the introduction to the section *Beis Acharon* in the *Sheloh*, where this subject is discussed.

Similarly, with regard to Divine retribution as a whole, it is written:⁴ “Your evil will chastise you,” i.e., the suffering visited upon man is a natural consequence of sin.

This principle also applies with regard to the punishment Chavah received, the *niddah* state. This punishment is a direct result of the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge. The evil created through the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge becomes the blood which renders a woman a *niddah*. Therefore the woman becomes ritually impure.

The Jewish people are “a holy nation”;⁵ and each individual is entirely good. This applies not only with regard to the G-dly soul, but also with regard to the animal soul. By nature, the animal soul has no desire for forbidden things. (On the contrary, its inherent desires focus only on things which are permitted.⁶) Therefore as soon as bodily evil becomes a significant entity,⁷ a Jewish body cannot hold it within itself and discharges it.⁸

Nevertheless, the very fact that evil exists within a Jewish body is a sign that something is lacking (the lack having been caused by the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge). Therefore the person is deemed impure.

THE ULTIMATE ANALOGY

There is a debate among the Rabbis as to whether the prohibition against marital relations while a woman is in the

4. *Yirmeyahu* 2:19.

5. *Shmos* 19:6.

6. *Tanya*, ch. 8.

7. For until menstrual blood reaches the vaginal channel, a woman is not rendered impure (*Niddah* 5:1).

8. There is a slight difficulty reconciling these statements with those of the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Mahadura Basra*, at the conclusion of sec. 4.

niddah state is a side effect of her impure status or a separate prohibition. There is strong support for the second approach.⁹

Man and woman, all the elements of their being, and all the laws applying to them, are a manifestation of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people.¹⁰ For they, like every other entity in this world, are an echo of their spiritual source.

Extending the above analogy, the *niddah* state refers to Jews in a state of sin, when they are banished from their natural home.¹¹ While in this state, there are aspects which relate to the concept of impurity. Nevertheless, with regard to establishing a connection with G-d — the fundamental desire of every Jew¹² and the objective of his observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* — the obstacle is not one of impurity,¹³ but rather a prohibition.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN PROHIBITIONS AND IMPURITY

The distinction between a prohibition and impurity can be explained as follows: Prohibitions guard against a type of evil that can be appreciated by mortal intellect or emotion. For example, forbidden foods¹⁴ dull the sensitivity of the heart

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9. See Asvin d'Oraisa, sec. 21. See also *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Yoreh De'ah*, sec. 183 (*Mahadura Basra, Hagaah*, 789a); the responsa of the *Tzemach Tzedek, Yoreh De'ah*, Responsa 138, sec. 1; 139, sec. 3.
 10. See our Sages' interpretations of *Shir HaShirim*.
 11. This is reflected in the word *niddah*, which relates to the term *nad*, meaning "wander." See also the *Targum* which renders it as "removed."
 12. See *Tanya*, ch. 41.
 13. Even impurity does not prevent this connection, as it is written (*Vayikra* 16:16): "He who dwells among you amidst your impurity."
 14. Even when the prohibition is not indigenous to the food, but rather results from a person's thoughts or speech — for example, a person who slaughters an animal in worship of a mountain (*Chulin* 39b) — it breeds undesirable tendencies in a person's character. For example, the *Midrash (Rus Rabbah* 3:13) relates that when the mother of Elisha ben Avuia (*Acher*) was pregnant with him, she passed by a temple of pagan gods. She smelled the fragrance of the

and mind.¹⁵ Even when exceptions are allowed, e.g., a pregnant woman who smells the fragrance of forbidden food and is aroused, and is therefore granted permission to taste it,¹⁶ partaking of such food still imparts undesirable tendencies.¹⁷

meat roasted as a sacrifice and had a powerful desire for the food. Fearful for her health and that of her child, the Rabbis permitted her to eat. And the influence of that food later gave rise to *Acher's* negative tendencies.

These negative tendencies were not endowed as a punishment for the deeds of *Acher's* mother, for she did not commit a transgression; in such an instance, a woman is permitted to partake of forbidden food. As the wording of the *Midrash*: “they gave her from this food, and she ate” implies, she was granted permission by the Rabbis. It is unlikely that because the worship of false gods was involved, the Rabbis would have ruled that she should die rather than transgress.

{The *Jerusalem Talmud* (*Chagigah* 2:1) states that she smelled incense offered to a false deity, and this gave rise to *Acher's* negative tendencies. According to that source, it is possible to say that *Acher's* negative qualities came as a punishment for his mother's deeds. See, however, *Tosafos* (*Chagigah* 15a), who maintains that the text in the *Jerusalem Talmud* follows that of the *Midrash* cited above.}

Based on the above, we can appreciate the interpretation offered by the *Shach* and the *Taz* to the *Ramah's* ruling (*Yoreh De'ah* 81:7) that a woman who eats forbidden foods should not nurse a child. This applies even when the nursemaid is permitted to eat the forbidden foods because of a danger to her life.

In this instance, it would be wrong to make a distinction between a severe prohibition like food offered to an idol, and pig's meat. On the contrary, it is apparent from this ruling that although the food offered to idols was forbidden only because of man's intent, even when one is allowed to partake of it, it brings about undesirable tendencies. Surely this concept applies with regard to eating pork and the like, when the undesirable tendencies are indigenous to the meat itself.

15. See the commentary of the *Ramban* to *Vayikra* 11:13, and *Sefer HaChinuch* (*mitzvah* 73).
16. See *Yoma* 82a, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 617:2.
17. Although partaking of forbidden food imparts undesirable tendencies, when a threat to life is involved it is a *mitzvah* to partake. To cite a parallel, when necessary, one limb is amputated in order to save a person's life.

This reflects the concept that the undesirable nature of the food remains unchanged, although it is permitted in this instance. This concept is also reflected in the *Ramban's* ruling (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Shabbos* 2:1) that a threat to life causes the Torah's prohibitions to be *dichuyah*, “suspended,”

Impurity, by contrast, refers to a dimension of evil which cannot be appreciated by mortal hearts and minds. Instead, it is as the *Midrash* states:¹⁸ “It is a statute which I (G-d) ordained, a decree that I instituted.”

For this reason, most of the Torah’s prohibitions remain pertinent in the present era, while the laws of ritual impurity by and large applied only in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Whenever one can appreciate evil, one must take precautions against it. Evil which we cannot detect, however, and which is deemed evil solely by virtue of G-d’s decree, conflicts only with the high levels of holiness revealed in the era of the *Beis HaMikdash*. It does not disrupt the reduced levels of holiness revealed in the present era.¹⁹

For this reason, most of the few laws concerning ritual purity which are practiced today²⁰ pertain to priests. Since they are endowed with an extra measure of holiness, they must protect themselves from ritual impurity. Moreover, even priests are not enjoined against contact with all forms of ritual impurity.²¹

rather than *hutra*, “lifted.” (The comments of the Rogachover Gaon to that *halachah* require further analysis.)

There is a slight difficulty with the above thesis based on *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, which states that when our Sages permit non-kosher food because of a threat to life, it becomes “absolutely permitted.” It must, however, be noted that in that Epistle, the word “absolutely” is surrounded by parenthesis, and is lacking in certain of the early printings of the *Tanya* [indicating that perhaps the Alter Rebbe felt the matter required reconsideration].

18. *Bamidbar Rabbah*, the beginning of *Parshas Chukas*; see also *Rambam, Mishneh Torah*, the conclusion of *Hilchos Mikvaos*.
19. To cite a parallel: one may not partake of the sacrificial offerings while in a state of ritual impurity. One may, however, partake of ordinary foods. See *Kuzari*, Discourse 3, Sec. 49.
20. Among the other laws of ritual impurity relevant today are those which apply to the water used for a *mikveh* and the *schach* used for a *sukkah*.
21. Moreover, the priesthood is associated with *kabbalas ol*, a commitment which transcends intellect; this is the foundation of our Divine service. This is illus-

Although the evil associated with a prohibition can be appreciated more readily than the evil associated with impurity, there is a more severe dimension associated with impurity. For since the evil associated with impurity is not easily discerned, one will not eradicate it through *teshuvah* as quickly as one would correct error involving those matters specifically forbidden by the Torah.²²

Moreover, as reflected by the fact that ritual impurity is a quality which cannot be grasped by mortal intellect, it mars the levels of soul that transcend reason and understanding.²³

In this context, it is explained that with regard to the relationship between the Jews and G-d, the evil generated through sin — and on a more general level, the Sin of the Golden Calf, which parallels the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge — is comparable to a prohibition and not to a matter of impurity, i.e., it affects our conscious powers, and not the essential powers of the soul. The essence of the soul remains vigorously united with G-d.

TWO SUPPORTS

Support for the notion that the ban on sexual relations during the *niddah* state involves a prohibition and is not a result of impurity can be drawn from the following:⁹

a) With regard to the laws of *niddah*, we employ the principle: “In a case of doubt, the more lenient view is

trated by the fact that the *Mishnah* (*Berachos* 1:1) associates the time for the recitation of the *Shema* — a declaration of *kabbalas ol* — with the time the priests partake of *terumah*. Since the priesthood serves such a purpose, it is necessary to take into consideration even the more sophisticated levels of evil associated with impurity.

22. See the discussion of related concepts in the *sichah* of *Parshas Vayikra* in this series.

23. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim* 43c, and the conclusion of *Parshas Acharei*.

followed.”²⁴ *Tosafos*²⁵ notes that with regard to questions of impurity in a private domain, we find that even when several doubtful factors are involved, the more stringent ruling is followed. Why then is the more lenient ruling followed with regard to questions regarding the *niddah* state?

Tosafos answers that the leniency is granted only with regard to relations between a woman and her husband. This indicates that the laws governing those relations are matters involving prohibitions and not impurity.

b) On the verse:²⁶ “And she shall count seven days,” our Sages comment:²⁷ “by herself;” she alone is responsible. From this, our Rabbis²⁸ derive the concept that the statements of one witness are accepted with regard to the Torah’s prohibitions.

This supports the argument that the prohibition against sexual relations with a *niddah* involves a prohibition, not impurity. For laws regarding impurity cannot be derived from laws regarding prohibitions. This applies even when the state-

24. As explained by the *M’lo HaRoyim*, *Mareches Sefeika d’Oraisa*, sec. 10, and others according to *Tosafos* (whose view is under discussion), this applies even with regard to Scriptural law. There are also more stringent views which include the *Tzemach Tzedek* (Responsa to *Yoreh De’ah*, Responsum 71; see also the conclusion of the *maamar* entitled *Mitzvas Tumas Metzora* in *Derech Mitzvosecho*), which maintains that according to Scriptural Law, in a case of doubt, one should follow the more severe opinion. Nevertheless, even according to these authorities, the fact that with regard to a *sefek safeika* — a situation where the doubt is compounded — a more lenient ruling is followed with regard to prohibitions, in contrast to the laws regarding impurity, indicates that even one doubt has an effect according to Scriptural Law.

25. *Bava Kamma* 11a, entry *D’ein*.

26. *Vayikra* 15:28.

27. *Kesubos* 72a.

28. *Tosafos*, *Gittin* 2b. See also the *Tzemach Tzedek*, *Shaar HaMiluim*, *Chidushim L’Yevamos* (17d-20b).

ment of one witness would be accepted with regard to matters of impurity.²⁹

THE ANALOGUE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH G-D

Every particular regarding a Torah concept is precise, and the laws that apply in the realm of *Nigleh*, the revealed dimension of Torah law, have parallels in *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the Torah's mystic teachings. This also applies with regard to the fact that the *niddah* state is considered to involve a prohibition and not a matter of ritual impurity.

The Jews are described³⁰ as “one nation on the earth.” This implies that even as they are involved with matters of this earth, they remain within G-d's domain, where His oneness is expressed. As mentioned above, even while sinning, a Jew's soul remains faithful to Him.

Because a Jew's soul is close to G-d, one might think that even when there is a *question* of evil, one should be judged impure. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, the spiritual parallel to the *niddah* state, a Jew's distance from G-d, is not a matter of impurity, but can be likened to a prohibition, i.e., the lack and the distance from G-d involves only one's conscious powers, intellect and emotion. As our Sages say:³¹ “A person will not commit a sin unless he is possessed by a spirit of folly.” At that time, he neither understands nor feels G-d's greatness.

29. The question whether we accept the statements of one witness with regard to questions of impurity in a private domain is discussed by the *Shev Shemaita*, *Shemaita* 6. (It is questionable if the doubt raised by the *Shav Shemaita* applies in the matter under discussion. Note the development of this concept by the *Tzemach Tzedek*, *loc. cit.*)

30. *II Shmuel* 7:23.

31. *Sotah* 3a; see also *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 121a.

Admittedly, the evil connected with a prohibition does temporarily interrupt a Jew's connection with G-d. But when there is only a *question* as to whether a prohibition has been violated, this does not interfere with the connection between the Jews and G-d.³²

With regard to the second support cited above: The difference between one witness and two witnesses can be explained as follows. The significance of the testimony of two witnesses depends on a court, for it is the power of a court which gives weight to their testimony. For that reason, as long as witnesses do not make their statements in the presence of a court, they can retract them.³³

The acceptance of the statement of one witness, by contrast, depends on his *chezkas kashrus*, the assumption that he is an acceptable witness. This is a reflection of the influence of his G-dly soul. Why is he believed? Because every Jew has a *chezkas kashrus*.³⁴

With regard to the *chezkas kashrus*, the acceptability of the woman (the Jewish people) to her husband (G-d), there is no need to take the matter to court, neither an earthly court nor a heavenly court. One can rely on the Jews' G-dly souls.

When a Jew heaves a genuine sigh because of his undesirable conduct, he does not need a court to clear him of culpability. And then, as is required of a husband, G-d provides him with sustenance and clothing, and unites with him,

32. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Vayikra* in this series, which explains that with regard to the soul's encompassing powers, a questionable violation of a prohibition is more severe than an instance in which a prohibition was definitely violated. This, however, relates to the concept of impurity and not prohibition.

33. *Jerusalem Talmud, Kesuvos* 2:3; *Tosefta, Sanhedrin* 6:6; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 29.

34. See *Sanhedrin* 3:1.

PARSHAS METZORA

as it is said:³⁵ “Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one.”

(Adapted from *Sichos Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5715)



35. See *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 93b.

SHABBOS HAGADOL

WHEN SAGES SPEAK

In the first section dealing with the laws of Pesach,¹ the Alter Rebbe writes:

It has become customary in these latter generations for the [local Rabbinic] sage to expound upon the laws of Pesach on the preceding *Shabbos*, unless that *Shabbos* is Pesach eve,² and upon the laws of Sukkos on *Shabbos Shuvah* [the *Shabbos* of Repentance].

The essence of the matter is to speak about and teach G-d's ways, and give instruction concerning the deed which must be performed.

This practice has its source in the customs of the *Maharil*, and is also cited by the *Bach* and the *Magen Avraham*. But there is a slight difference between the wording chosen by the Alter Rebbe and that used by the *Magen Avraham*.

The *Magen Avraham*³ states: "The *Maharil* would also expound on the laws of Sukkos on *Shabbos Shuvah*." By adding the word "also," the *Magen Avraham* implies that, that Sukkos was not the only subject of the *Maharil*'s talk on *Shabbos Shuvah*. He would expound upon the laws of Yom Kippur, but would not confine himself to that subject and

1. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 429:1.

2. In which case the talk is given on the preceding *Shabbos*.

3. 429:1.

would also speak of the laws of Sukkos.⁴ The Alter Rebbe, by contrast, does not mention the word “also,” and speaks only of the laws of Sukkos. Why does he not mention the need to speak of the laws of Yom Kippur?

Another question arises: *Shabbos Shuvah* is not always the *Shabbos* directly before Sukkos. In many years, there is another *Shabbos* between Yom Kippur and Sukkos. It seems reasonable that the exposition of the laws of Sukkos should take place on the *Shabbos* directly preceding the holiday. In particular, this would seem true with regard to the Alter Rebbe’s ruling, which doesn’t mention Yom Kippur.

Why should the laws of Sukkos be mentioned on *Shabbos Shuvah* even when it is not the *Shabbos* which directly precedes Sukkos?

Also, there is a difficulty with the wording used by the Alter Rebbe: Why does he distinguish between “G-d’s ways” and “the deed which must be performed”? What is meant by these terms?⁵

It is possible to explain as follows: The Alter Rebbe alludes to the fact that on these two *Shabbosos*, our Rabbis should discuss not only the laws of Pesach and Sukkos, but also concepts that relate to our Divine service in general. This is alluded to by the term “G-d’s ways.”

Similarly, the Alter Rebbe does not mention Yom Kippur because the laws of Yom Kippur do not require special elaboration; they are included in the “ways of G-d” which are

4. This interpretation is offered by the *Machtzis HaShekel*.

5. Significantly, the *Magen Avraham* uses slightly different wording, stating: “to speak about and teach G-d’s ways, giving instruction concerning the deed which must be performed.” By omitting the word “and,” he implies that “the deed which must be performed” refers to “the ways of G-d.” The Alter Rebbe, by contrast, adds the word “and,” indicating that these are two different subjects.

taught on *Shabbos HaGadol* and *Shabbos Shuvah*. To cite a parallel: It is not customary for the Rabbis to speak on the *Shabbos* preceding Shavuos because “Shavuos does not have distinct laws of its own. All the prohibitions and leniencies which we observe are also observed on Pesach and Sukkos.”⁶

BODY AND SOUL

The expression “ways of G-d” merits explanation. A way leads from one place to another. The goal is not the way itself, but the destination. It is, however, impossible to reach one’s destination without the “way.”

The ultimate purpose of the entire creation is that the Jewish people should observe *mitzvos* in this material world. Nevertheless, “a *mitzvah* without [the proper] intent is like a body without a soul.”⁷ In order to observe the *mitzvos* in a proper way, the love and fear of G-d are necessary, for they infuse vitality into the observance of *mitzvos*.⁸ These emotions are the “ways of G-d” which lead to the goal of observing *mitzvos*.

It is true that “deed is most essential.”⁹ Though someone may possess all the intentions associated with a *mitzvah*, if he fails to actually observe the *mitzvah*, he is transgressing G-d’s will. When, by contrast, one observes a *mitzvah* without the proper intent, one will still have fulfilled the essence of the *mitzvah*, thus carrying out G-d’s will.¹⁰ Nevertheless, observance should be accomplished with energy and vitality, and this is possible only through love and fear.

6. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 429:2.

7. See *Likkutei Torah* of the AriZal, *Parshas Eikev*; *Sheloh*, *Masechtes Tamid*, *Amud Tefillah*, *Inyan Chanukah* (p. 249b); *Tanya*, ch. 38.

8. See *Tanya*, chs. 4 and 38; *Kuntres HaAvodah*, ch. 2, p. 15.

9. Cf. *Avos* 1:16.

10. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Mishpatim* in this series, where this concept is explained.

One might protest: What's wrong if one fulfills a *mitzvah* merely to satisfy one's obligation? Although one's deed is "like a body without a soul," the "body" is still intact, and that seems to be the essence of the matter.

In reply, it must be explained that when a person observes *mitzvos* merely to fulfill his obligation, or out of habit, there will ultimately be a lack in his observance.

At the outset, he will observe the *mitzvos* without *hiddurim*, fastidious care.¹¹ This will inevitably lead to spiritual descent. For if a person does not invest energy and vitality in the Torah and its *mitzvos*, that energy will find expression in matters at variance to these spiritual purposes, setting in motion a downward spiral.

Perhaps at the outset, the person's observance will remain sound, for after all, he seeks to fulfill his obligations, and therefore will control his feelings and desires in order to do what is required of him. But eventually, since his desire and energy are focused outside the sphere of holiness, he will seek (and find, for "a bribe [and particularly the bribe of self-love] blinds")¹² loopholes, and ultimately he will become involved in forbidden matters. From here, "one sin leads to another,"¹³ and he will continue downward, transgressing even prohibitions for which he cannot find a loophole. Ultimately, he will no longer oppose his desire for forbidden matters, and will give in to it without remorse.

11. It must be emphasized that these *hiddurim* relate to the essence of the *mitzvah*. For *mitzvos* are G-d's will, and will is an expression of the soul that knows no division. The difference between the fundamental requirement of the *mitzvah* and its observance *b'hiddur* is relevant only with regard to the concepts of reward and punishment. (See *Sichos Chag HaShavuos*, 5693, *Likkutei Dibburim*, p. 1540. See also *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 481:1.)

12. *Devarim* 16:19.

13. *Avos* 4:2.

For these reasons, observance must be charged with the energy and vitality which stem from love and fear. This process is called the ways of G-d, for it leads to perfect observance of the *mitzvos*.

FASHIONING G-D'S DWELLING

Moreover, even when the actual observance of *mitzvos* is unaffected, performing them like “a body without a soul” does not truly fulfill G-d's will. G-d's will is that the *mitzvos* should be “living *mitzvos*.”

To explain: The *mitzvos* were given with the intent of “refining the created beings.”¹⁴ This implies that the person performing the *mitzvah* will thereby be refined and brought into connection with G-d. Ultimately, this connection should permeate all of a person's potentials, and the innermost depths of his soul. Accordingly, if a person observes *mitzvos* only to fulfill his obligation, the observance will affect only his power of deed. This runs contrary to G-d's will, for G-d desires that *every* aspect of a person's character should be connected to Him. This is achieved when a person invests all his energies in the observance of *mitzvos*.¹⁰

The Divine intent is that all of a person's potentials, including his conscious powers, be connected with G-d. The connection of these conscious powers is higher than that of the power of deed. Nevertheless, achieving love and fear of G-d should not be considered an independent purpose. Instead, the purpose of love and fear is to introduce vitality into the actual observance of *mitzvos*.¹⁵

14. *Bereishis Rabbah* 44:1.

15. See *Tanya*, ch. 40, which describes love and fear as “wings” which elevate the observance of the *mitzvos*, and which explains that “the purpose of love is Divine service motivated by love.”

For the ultimate intent is the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in this lowly material world.¹⁶ This is achieved through using the lowest powers we possess — performing *mitzvos* with the power of deed. Nevertheless, the *completion* of G-d's dwelling comes about when a person observes the *mitzvos* with all his potentials.¹⁷

On this basis, we can appreciate the reference to love and fear as “the ways of G-d.” The ultimate purpose is the actual observance of the *mitzvos*; this is what establishes a connection to G-d's essence. But it is “the ways of G-d” which bring that connection from a hidden state into revelation. Our understanding, love, and fear of G-d bring out the connection to G-d established through our deeds.

TWO WAYS

The above also enables us to understand why the Alter Rebbe speaks of “the ways of G-d,” using the plural term. With regard to the observance of *mitzvos*, by contrast, he uses the singular form “the deed which must be performed.”

The distinction can be explained as follows: Although there are 613 *mitzvos*, they all have the same purpose: the dedication of one's power of deed to G-d. Therefore, the singular term is in place. By contrast, everyone serves G-d according to his personal level. Hence with regard to “the ways of G-d” the plural is employed.

16. See *Tanya*, ch. 36.

17. To explain this concept within the analogy of a dwelling: There are two aspects to a dwelling: a) that one's entire *essence* is found there, and b) that in one's dwelling, this essence is *revealed*.

The latter dimension is contributed by love and fear, which introduce vitality into our observance of *mitzvos*. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Korach* in this series where this concept is explained.

In general, there are two types of “ways” (or it can be said that a single way serves two purposes):¹⁸ one of ascent and one of descent (in analogy, one goes from the field to the king’s palace, and one goes from the king’s palace to the field). This represents the difference between the Divine service of the month of Nissan and the Divine service of the month of Tishrei. Nissan expresses the drawing down of G-dliness into our world, while Tishrei gives expression to man’s potential for ascent, as explained in other sources.¹⁹

Therefore the custom is for our Rabbis to speak twice a year, on the *Shabbos* before Pesach, and on *Shabbos Shuvah*, for the *Shabbos* before Pesach expresses the motif of drawing down G-dliness, and *Shabbos Shuvah* relates to man’s ascent. These two addresses thus embrace the Divine service of the entire year: the address of *Shabbos HaGadol* includes the Divine service of the summer months, and the address of *Shabbos Shuvah* includes the Divine service of the winter months.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Shuvah*, 5719)



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18. See *Biurei HaZohar*, the beginning of *Parshas Pinchas* and the *maamar* entitled *Havayah Yechatu*, 5689, ch. 6.
19. See the *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 186a, which explains that Nissan is called the month of spring, *אביב* in Hebrew. This name illustrates a progression of the letters from the beginning onward, while the name Tishrei (תשרי) begins from the end of the alphabet. Similarly, the *Zohar* (*ibid.*, p. 51b) states that the progressive order of *אביב* points to the influence of *chesed*, “kindness,” while the reverse order of *תשרי* points to the influence of *gevurah*, “might.” See also similar concepts in the *Likkutei Torah* of the *AriZal*, *Parshas Vayeitzei*, entry *Sheva kochvei lechas*.

(Note, however, other sources, e.g., *Taamei HaMitzvos*, *Parshas Bo* as quoted in *Ateres Rosh*, in the beginning of the *maamar* dealing with *Asaras Yimei HaTeshuvah*; *Pri Etz Chayim*, *Shaar Rosh HaShanah*, ch. 4; *Shaar HaKavannos*, *Inyan Rosh HaShanah*, p. 4; *Nahar Shalom* at the conclusion of *Etz Chayim*, in the Warsaw printing.)

See the discussion of this subject in *Kehillas Yaakov*, *Mareches Yud-Beis Chadashim*.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

57

Our generation is the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, as proclaimed and announced by my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the Yosef of our generation (named after the first Yosef who proclaimed and announced that "G-d will surely remember you and bring you up from this land to the land that was sworn to Avraham, to Yitzchak and the Yaakov"¹). For all our deeds and Divine service have already been completed, all appointed times have already passed, teshuvah has already been done, and all the preparations have already been finished In a manner of "great preparation," all is ready for the festive meal² of the time to come, Livyosan, Shor Habor³ and Yayin Meshumar.⁴

(From the talk of the 10th of Teves (may it be transformed into rejoicing), and Shabbos Parshas Vayechi, 14 Teves 5752)

1. Our Parsha 50:24.

2. Based on the expression of our Sages, of blessed memory - Avos, chapter 3, Mishneh 16. Sanhedrin 38a and Rashi's commentary.

3. See *Bava Basra* 75a. And *Vayikra Rabba* chapter 13:3.

4. *Brochos* 34:b. See there for cross references.

We have already mentioned many times the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that aside from the fact that already "all the appointed times have passed,"¹ the Jewish people have already done teshuvah and already everything is completed, even including "polishing the buttons." We only need G-d to open the eyes of the Jewish people so that they should see that the true and complete Redemption already exists, and we are sitting already by the prepared table at the festive meal of Livyosan, Shor HaBor,² etc.

Therefore it's understood... in this generation and at this time, after every requirement has been accomplished (as mentioned above), one has the complete assurance in the Torah that there will certainly be "(You will remember the day of your exodus from the land of Egypt) all the days of your life... to bring about the days of Moshiach."³

There is no need for any interruption, G-d Forbid, between "all the days of your life" and "the days of Moshiach" (which has been the situation for the Jewish people in all the generations **before** our generation). Rather, "all the days of your life" for every Jew, living physically as a soul in a body, includes in the simple sense (also) "the days of Moshiach." This is without an interruption, since the Redemption is actually coming imminently and immediately at this instant and in this place (even if the condition is one of night, "coming to Egypt"). Thus the last moment of exile and the very last instant of exile become the first moment and the very first instant of Redemption.

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

2. See *Bava Basra* 74b ff. *Pesachim* 119b and in other places.

3. *Brochos* 12b.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

And from "the days of your life" at this time and in this place, without any interruption whatsoever, G-d Forbid, (even if he is already older than seventy years, etc.) every Jew will go immediately - totally and completely, "Reuven and Shimon descended, Reuven and Shimon arose,"⁴ - into the continuation of "all the days of your life.," into the days of Moshiach and the eternal life that then will be.

Practically, this means that the Divine service of the Jewish people now must be "to bring about the days of Moshiach." We must reveal that the situation of "coming to Egypt" in exile is in truth a situation of the "Redemption of Israel." [This is achieved] through his preparation of himself and others for the situation of "the days of Moshiach."

The above includes (particularly in conjunction with the day of passing of the Rambam⁵) strengthening and increasing the study of the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*, especially the Laws of King Moshiach,⁶ in the last two chapters of the "Laws of Kings" which conclude the *Mishneh Torah*.

In addition to one's own study of this, one should also influence other Jews around him (men, women and children) in a manner of "raising many disciples,"⁷ and many more will see and emulate them.

May it be G-d's Will, that through the resolution itself will come imminently and immediately the reward, the actual fulfillment of the Rambam's words at the conclusion of his work,⁸ that after there

4. *Vayikra Rabba*, chapter 32:5. See there for cross references.

5. [*The Rambam passed away on 20 Teves. Translator's note.*]

6. This is how it is titled in the Venice edition of 5284 and 5310.

7. *Avos*, chapter 1, *Mishneh* 1.

8. *Laws of Kings*, end of chapter 11.

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already exists "a king from the House of Dovid, expert in the Torah and involved in mitzvos like Dovid his father... and he will compel all Israel to walk in [the ways of Torah], strengthen its breeches and fight the wars of G-d" - who is the "presumed Moshiach" [b'chezkas Moshiach] - there will already be immediately the "confirmed Moshiach" [Moshiach vadai], who "does all the above and succeeds, builds the Temple in its place and gathers the dispersed of Israel... He will then improve the whole world so that it serves G-d in unity,..."

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shmos, 21 Teves 5752)

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